

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 PM-03 NSC-10 NSCE-00 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 L-02 DODE-00 ACDA-10 IO-03

SAJ-01 MBFR-02 PRS-01 TRSE-00 RSR-01 EURE-00 AEC-05

AECE-00 /074 W

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P R 051812 Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6131

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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USNMR SHAPE

SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 BONN 09624

LIMDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, GW, US, UR

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION WITH DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER ON  
DEFENSE MATTERS

HELSINKI FOR THE SECRETARY

REF: A. BONN 09362; B. BONN 09485

BEGIN SUMMARY: AT HIS REQUEST, I CALLED UPON DEFENSE  
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MINISTER LEBER JULY 3 TO DISCUSS SOME OF THE DEFENSE PROBLEMS WHICH HAVE BECOME THE SUBJECT OF WIDESPREAD PUBLIC AND OFFICIAL COMMENT IN GERMANY IN RECENT WEEKS. HE WAS CHARACTERISTICALLY FORTHRIGHT AND OPEN IN POINTING OUT HIS CONCERNS, SOME OF WHICH HE INDICATED HE WILL RAISE DURING HIS TALKS WITH DEFENSE SECRETARY SCHLESINGER OVER JULY 17-18. HIS MAJOR CONCERNS CENTERED ON WHETHER THE US- SOVIET NUCLEAR AGREEMENT ON THE PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR WAR WOULD IN ANY WAY AFFECT NATO STRATEGY AND THE EFFECT HE EXPECTED IT TO HAVE ON HIS ABILITY TO OBTAIN BUNDESTAG SUPPORT FOR HIGH DEFENSE EXPENDITURES. HE ALSO TOUCHED ON THE PENTAGON STUDY AND SECRETARY SCHLESINGER'S DPC MINISTERIAL PRESENTATION. IN THE MEANWHILE, I HAVE LEARNED THAT THE SAN CLEMENTE MEETING HAS PARTIALLY MITIGATED MINISTER LEBER'S CONCERN WITH RESPECT TO THE EFFECT THE NUCLEAR AGREEMENT COULD HAVE ON NATO STRATEGY. END SUMMARY.

1. LEBER STARTED OFF BY STRESSING THAT LIKE OTHER FRG OFFICIALS, HE FULLY SUPPORTED THE RECENT US- SOVIET NUCLEAR AGREEMENT. IN THE BRANDT GOVERNMENT, THERE IS WIDESPREAD FEELING IT WAS AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO PEACE AND STABILITY IN EUROPE AND AS SUCH DESERVES FRG SUPPORT. BUT DESPITE THIS, HE SAID THE AGREEMENT FRANKLY GAVE RISE TO SOME DEGREE OF UNCERTAINTY, PARTICULARLY AMONG THOSE OFFICIALS CONCERNED WITH DEFENSE MATTERS. HE INDICATED HE HOPED TO DISCUSS THESE MATTERS IN DEPTH WITH SECRETARY SCHLESINGER, DR. KISSINGER, AND FORMER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE LAIRD DURING HIS VISIT TO WASHINGTON OVER JULY 17-18.

2. LEBER INDICATED THAT WHILE HE READILY UNDERSTOOD THAT THE NUCLEAR AGREEMENT AIMED AT THE PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR WAR, HE WONDERED WHETHER ITS ULTIMATE EFFECT WOULD BE TO UNDERMINE THE DETERRENT CONCEPT WHICH WAS AT THE HEART OF NATO DEFENSE STRATEGY. ALREADY, HE SAID, SOME OF HIS SENIOR BUNDESWEHR COMMANDERS WERE QUESTIONING WHETHER THIS WAS NOT THE CASE. GRANTED THAT THE AGREEMENT EXPRESSES US AND SOVIET POLICY TO AVOID CONFRONTATION, MANY FRG OFFICIALS THOUGHT IT IMPLIED AT LEAST AN OBLIGATION FOR THE NUCLEAR POWERS TO CONSULT PRIOR TO THE  
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USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN THE EVENT OF CONFLICT. IF THIS WERE THE CASE, NATO STRATEGY, WHICH CALLS FOR FLEXIBLE RESPONSE TO INCLUDE THE USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS, WOULD SEEM TO BE UNDERMINED. LEBER EMPHASIZED THAT FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF FRG INTERESTS, THE DETERRENCE CONCEPT MUST BE KEPT INTACT; NO SOVIET MISUNDERSTANDING COULD ARISE ABOUT OUR DETERMINATION TO USE NUCLEAR WEAPONS, IF NECES-

SARY.

3. THUS HIS MAJOR AND IMMEDIATE CONCERNS CENTERED ON THE IMPLICATIONS THE AGREEMENT MIGHT HAVE ON OVERALL NATO STRATEGY, BUT THE FRG ALSO FACED THE PROBLEM OF INTEGRATING IT INTO BROADER FRG DEFENSE POLICY. HERE, HE FRANKLY WORRIED ABOUT THE EFFECT SUCH AN IMPORTANT AGREEMENT WILL HAVE ON THE WILLINGNESS OF THE BUNDESTAG, AS WELL AS THE PUBLIC AT LARGE, TO SUPPORT DEFENSE EXPENDITURES ON CONVENTIONAL FORCES. THE ATTITUDE OF THE GERMAN PARLIAMENT TO VOTE LARGE SUMS FOR DEFENSE WAS ALSO LINKED IN A GENERAL WAY TO THE WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE ON THE PENTAGON STUDY AND SECRETARY SCHLESINGER'S STATEMENT  
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FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6132

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

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AT THE DPC MINISTERIAL. BOTH OF THESE SUGGESTED US INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES ABOUT THE EAST- WEST MILITARY BALANCE DIFFERED VITALLY FROM THOSE OF NATO. THE OVERALL EFFECT OF THIS WAS TO RAISE THE QUESTION IN MANY MINDS WHETHER THE US WAS, IN EFFECT, CONSIDERING DECOUPLING ITS NUCLEAR FORCES FROM NATO'S CONVENTIONAL DETERRENT. HE PERSONALLY DID NOT THINK THE STRENGTH OF NATO'S CONVENTIONAL FORCES SHOULD BE EXAGGERATED. PARADOXICALLY, THE SCHLESINGER PRESENTATION AND THE POST ARTICLE STRENGTHENED THE ARGUMENTS OF HIS OPPONENTS, MANY OF

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WHOM WERE IN HIS OWN SPD PARTY, WHO VIGOROUSLY OPPOSE SIZEABLE DEFENSE BUDGETS. SUCH PEOPLE COULD POINT OUT THAT THE US BELIEVED NATO AND WP FORCES WERE IN ROUGH EQUILIBRIUM AND ADDED DEFENSE EXPENDITURES WERE UNNECESSARY.

4. IN A SEPARATE CONVERSATION WITH ME ON THE SAME DAY, FINANCE MINISTER SCHMIDT ( WHO AS A FORMER DEFENSE MINISTER RETAINS A STRONG INTEREST IN MILITARY MATTERS) WENT THROUGH ESSENTIALLY THE SAME ARGUMENTS, ALTHOUGH IN SOMEWHAT STRONGER LANGUAGE. HE SEEMED PARTICULARLY AGITATED OVER WHAT HE CONSIDERED TO BE LACK OF ADEQUATE ADVANCE CONSULTATION ABOUT THE US- SOVIET AGREEMENT ON THE PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR WAR, AN AGREEMENT WHICH IN HIS VIEWS WENT TO THE HEART OF WESTERN EUROPEAN SECURITY. HE ARGUED THAT, WHATEVER US INTENTIONS MIGHT BE, THE EFFECT ON THE NATO ALLIANCE DURING THE NEXT YEARS WOULD INEVITABLY BE DISINTEGRATIVE, AND SAID HE HAD SO ADVISED THE CHANCELLOR. ALTHOUGH HE BELIEVED SUCH DEVELOPMENTS WOULD BE FUTILE, THERE WOULD NOW BE A REVIVAL OF INTEREST IN A EUROPEAN NUCLEAR DETERRENT AND A NEW FOCUS ON THE FRENCH FORCE DE FRAPPE. HE ADDED THAT HE ACCEPTED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE VERY CRITICAL LINE ON THE NUCLEAR AGREEMENT APPEARING IN THE FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG ( BONN' S 09294) AS A RESULT OF HIS TALK WITH FOREIGN AFFAIRS EDITOR GUNTHER GILLESSEN.

5. I WENT OVER THE SAME GROUND AS I HAD EARLIER WITH DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER, POINTING OUT IN CONCLUSION THAT IT WOULD BE MOST UNFORTUNATE IF BY CONSTANT MISINTERPRETATION OF OUR INTENTIONS AND OF RELEVANT TEXTS IN THE PRESS AND IN OFFICIAL CIRCLES, A DISTORTED AND INACCURATE VERSION BECAME COMMONLY ACCEPTED, WITH ITS NEGATIVE IMPLICATION FOR THE ALLIANCE, AND BEGAN TO OPERATE AS A

SELF- FULFILLING PROPHECY. SCHMIDT ADMITTED THIS MUST BE AVOIDED, BUT DID NOT VOLUNTEER TO MAKE A PERSONAL CONTRIBUTION TO HELP UNDO THE DAMAGE WHICH HAS ALREADY BEEN DONE, PARTLY THROUGH HIS OWN EFFORTS. A FURTHER POINT WHICH HE EMPHASIZED WAS THE IMPOSSIBLE POSITION OF EUROPEAN FINANCE AND DEFENSE MINISTERS IN THEIR EFFORTS TO OBTAIN ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR CONVENTIONAL

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FORCES IF THE BELIEF BECAME GENERAL THAT NATO'S CURRENT CONVENTIONAL FORCES WERE ADEQUATE TO MEET THE THREAT. HE NOTED THAT LEBER HAD ALREADY BEEN UNDER HEAVY ATTACK FROM WITHIN HIS OWN PARTY ON THIS VERY POINT, AND THAT HE (SCHMIDT) HAD HAD TO COME TO HIS RESCUE IN ARGUING FOR THE INCREASED DEFENSE EXPENDITURES ENVISAGED IN THE GOVERNMENT BUDGET.

6. COMMENT: I FOUND LEBER'S COMMENTS TO BE A TEMPERATE VERSION OF SOME OF THE CONCERNS WE HAVE HEARD ELSEWHERE IN MORE EXTREME FORM ABOUT OUR ALLEGED INTEREST TO SHIFT 14/3 STRATEGY, AND MORE RECENTLY, THE FEAR OF THE EFFECT THE US- SOVIET NUCLEAR AGREEMENT COULD HAVE ON THE NATO DEFENSE. CLEARLY, LEBER NEEDS FORTHRIGHT EXPOSITIONS FROM SENIOR US OFFICIALS ON THE SEVERAL DEFENSE MATTERS WHICH BOTHER HIM. IN OUR LENGTHY DISCUSSION, I EMPHASIZED THAT THE RECENT AGREEMENT WAS DESIGNED TO AVOID NUCLEAR WAR AND COMMITTED US TO NO OBLIGATIONS IN VIOLATION OF OUR NATO COMMITMENTS. IN ANY CASE, IF HOSTILITIES OCCURRED, THE AGREEMENT WOULD NO LONGER BE IN EFFECT AND WE WOULD BE FREE TO USE WHATEVER WEAPONS WE CHOSE. DRAWING UPON THE GUIDANCE WE HAVE RECEIVED ON THE NUCLEAR EXPERIENCE, THE PENTAGON STUDY AND THE SCHLESINGER STATEMENT ( STATE 127286), I STRESSED THAT WE HAVE NO INTENTION OF CHANGING NATO STRATEGY. HE ACCEPTED THESE EXPLANATIONS, BUT WITH, I BELIEVE, THE UNSPOKEN CAVEAT THAT HE IS THOROUGHLY PUZZLED WITH THE COINCIDENTAL EVENTS OF RECENT WEEKS WHICH SUGGEST TO HIM THAT WE ACTUALLY DO SEEK A NEW NATO STRATEGIC DOCTRINE.

7. I GATHER THAT LEBER IS UNDER PRESSURE FROM MANY OF HIS SENIOR STAFF OFFICERS WHO FEAR THE PREVENTION AGREEMENTS

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MENT-- SPECIFICALLY ARTICLE IV AND DESPITE ARTICLE VI--  
OBLIGES US TO CONSULT WITH THE SOVIETS PRIOR TO GNG  
NUCLEAR IN A CONVENTIONAL CONFLICT. IN THE PAST WEEK  
WE HAVE HAD SEVERAL DISCUSSIONS WITH OFFICIALS IN THE  
DEFENSE MINISTRY' S POL/ MIL AND PLANNING STAFFS WHO HAVE  
EXPRESSED GREAT CONCERN WITH THE EFFECT OF ARTICLE IV  
ON OUR NATO OBLIGATIONS. FOR INSTANCE, BUNDESWEHR  
GENERAL INSPECTOR ADMIRAL ZIMMERMANN TOLD US THERE IS  
WIDESPREAD UNEASINESS AMONG BUNDESWEHR OFFICERS ABOUT  
THE EFFECT THE AGREEMENT MAY HAVE ON 14/3 STRATEGY.

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WHILE RECOGNIZING THE GREAT IMPORTANCE OF THE AGREEMENT  
AS A MEANS TO AVOID NUCLEAR WAR, ZIMMERMAN ALSO  
QUESTIONED WHETHER IT INADVERTENTLY DECOUPLED BOTH THE

TACTICAL AS WELL AS STRATEGIC NUCLEAR DETERRENT FROM CONVENTIONAL DEFENSES. BOTH HE AND LEBER ARE CONVINCED THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE TO 14/3 STRATEGY AND BOTH PROBABLY WOULD OPPOSE OPENING 14/3 TO RE-EXAMINATION. ZIMMERMANN NOTED THAT 14/3 "PAPERS OVER" NUMEROUS DIFFERENCES ABOUT STRATEGY AMONG THE ALLIES, AND THE FRG SHOULD PREFER TO LEAVE UNTOUCHED THE ILL-DEFINED "GREY AREA" OF POSSIBLE NATO RESPONSES IN THE EVENT OF ATTACK. HIS VIEW, HOWEVER, REFLECTS WHAT SEEMS TO BE A PRACTICALLY UNANIMOUS OPINION OF THE FRG MILITARY STAFFS, THAT NATO'S ABILITY TO RESORT TO NUCLEAR WEAPONS MAY HAVE BEEN RESTRICTED BY THE PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR WAR AGREEMENT. INDEED THE FONOFF NATO SECTION TOLD US THEIR CONCLUSION, AFTER CAREFUL STUDY OF THE AGREEMENT, WAS THAT THE US HAD, UNDER ARTICLE IV, ACCEPTED AN OBLIGATION TO CONSULT WITH THE SOVIETS PRIOR TO USING NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN THE EVENT OF A CONVENTIONAL WAR.

8. LEBER'S LINE OF QUESTIONING PARALLELED THOSE OF FOREIGN MINISTER SCHEEL'S DURING MY CONVERSATION WITH HIM THE DAY PREVIOUSLY, JULY 2, AND GOES STRAIGHT TO THE HEART OF NATO STRATEGY (BONN 09485). FRG QUESTIONS ABOUT THE NUCLEAR AGREEMENT TAKE ON AN URGENT ASPECT BECAUSE OF UNCERTAINTY CAUSED BY OTHER EVENTS OF THE PAST FEW MONTHS. IT IS STILL UNCLEAR TO THE GERMANS WHAT THE IMPLICATIONS WERE OF THE CALL TO DISCUSS NATO STRATEGY IN THE PRESIDENT'S FOREIGN POLICY REPORT. REPORTS WE WERE CONSIDERING MANUFACTURING SMALL NUCLEAR WEAPONS, WITH INDICATIONS WE DIFFERED WITH NATO BALANCE OF FORCE ESTIMATES, HAVE BEEN PROFOUNDLY DISTURBING TO THE GERMANS. THE PENTAGON STUDY AND THE DPC MINISTERIAL PRESENTATION RAISED OTHER QUESTIONS. FINALLY, THE NUCLEAR AGREEMENT HAS CREATED THE SPECTER OF A DECOUPLING OF OUR NUCLEAR DETERRENT FROM CONVENTIONAL DEFENSE AT A TIME OF AN UNDERCURRENT OF FEAR THAT NEO-ISOLATIONIST TRENDS IN THE US WILL WEAKEN OUR NATO COMMITMENT.

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9. SUBSEQUENT TO MY MEETING WITH LEBER, I LEARNED THAT THE SAN CLEMENTE CONVERSATIONS HAVE HAD A BENEFICIAL EFFECT BY ANSWERING MANY OF HIS QUESTIONS. LEBER HAS SINCE SAID THAT HE APPRECIATED THE UNDERSTANDING WE SHOWED FOR FRG CONCERNS AND ABOUT THE EFFECT THE NUCLEAR AGREEMENT MIGHT HAVE ON NATO STRATEGY. THE SAN CLEMENTE MEETING WILL PERHAPS ALSO HELP TO COOL OFF SCHMIDT, WHO IS ABOUT TO DEPART ON A FIVE WEEK VACATION. HIS PRESENT STATE OF MIND, HOWEVER, IS AN AGITATED ONE, ACCURATELY REFLECTED IN TDF/ RDB-315/06206-73, WHICH GIVES A PARTICULARLY VIVID DESCRIPTION OF DISSATISFACTION

IN THE CABINET ABOUT THE LACK OF DETAILED CONSULTATION  
ABOUT THE NUCLEAR AGREEMENT. GENERALLY SPEAKING,  
SCHEEL' S, SCHMIDT' S AND LEBER' S VIEWS ( ALLOWING FOR  
DIFFERENCES ON EMPHASIS) REFLECT A BROAD CONSENSUS  
AMONG THE GERMAN DEFENSE OFFICIALS WHICH WILL OBVIOUSLY  
REQUIRE OUR CONTINUED ATTENTION.  
HILLENBRAND

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\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* LIMDIS

\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* SECRET



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